

1. (Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a sterilization tunnel for surrounding a plurality of containers with pressurized gas; and
at least one partition forming a plurality of zones within a sterilization tunnel having
different sterilant concentration levels.

3. (Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a sterilization tunnel for surrounding a plurality of containers with pressurized
gas;
a sterilant supply source to supply sterilant into the sterilization tunnel;
a control system operatively attached to a plurality of sterilant concentration zones
within the sterilization tunnel;
at least one gas supply source to supply the pressurized gas into the sterilization
tunnel; and
at least one gas exit to allow the pressurized gas to escape the sterilization tunnel.

5. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [4] 3, [wherein] further comprising at least one [each]
partition forming a plurality of sterilant concentration zones within the sterilization tunnel
[comprises at least one opening for allowing objects to pass through each partition].

17. (Twice Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a sterilization tunnel for surrounding a plurality of containers with pressurized
gas;

4 a sterilant supply source to supply sterilant into the sterilization tunnel;
5 a plurality of zones having [varying gas flow] a plurality of gas nozzles within the
6 sterilization tunnel; *new issue*
7 at least one partition forming a plurality of sterilant concentration zones within the
8 sterilization tunnel;
9 at least one gas supply source to supply the pressurized gas into the sterilization
10 tunnel; and
11 at least one gas exit to allow the pressurized gas to escape the sterilization tunnel.

1 33. (Amended) A method comprising:

2 providing a sterilization tunnel for surrounding a plurality of containers with
3 pressurized gas;
4 introducing sterilant from a sterilant supply source into the sterilization tunnel;
5 providing a plurality of sterilant concentration zones within the sterilization
6 tunnel;
7 providing at least one partition for forming said sterilant concentration zones; *OK*
8 introducing pressurized gas from at least one gas supply source into the
9 sterilization tunnel; and
10 allowing the pressurized gas to escape the sterilization tunnel.

1 35. (Amended) The method of claim [34] 33, further comprising [allowing objects to pass
2 through each partition] providing a control system operatively attached to the plurality of sterilant
3 concentration zones within the sterilization tunnel. *112 mod* *new issue*